

Question and Answer Session on Abiding in Christ

by Michael Durham

This sermon delves into the concept of abiding in Christ, emphasizing the reflexive nature of love for God as a response to experiencing His love. It explores the importance of understanding God's love as the fuel for the Christian life, leading to reflexive love for others. The message highlights the need to continually experience God's love afresh, which is synonymous with being filled with the Holy Spirit, letting the Word dwell richly, and abiding in Christ.

Scripture: 1 John 4:10, 1 John 4:19, Ephesians 3:17, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 5:5

Topics: "Abiding in Christ", "Experiencing God's Love"

Description

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Transcript

The following are primarily follow-up questions to Michael Durham's messages from his series at the Mengertree on John 15. Okay, another question. In the second service you mentioned that without the branches the vine cannot bear fruit, referring to Christ and his church.

Would you please be so kind to explain this statement, that without the branch the vine cannot bear fruit, referring to Christ and his church. If I'm understanding the question correctly, you're wanting me to answer what did I mean that the vine cannot produce fruit without the branches? Right, that sounds what they're asking. Okay.

I realize you dealt with some of that at the Mengertree, but they're most likely not there. Right. When you look at a vine, the Western mind in that in that pair, but we have to remember that this is a Eastern mindset, and the Jewish mindset was holistic, whereas a Greek or Western mindset is very analytical and dissects.

So we will take a grapevine and we dissect the branch off, and then we dissect the leaf off of that, and then we dissect the roots from the trunk in order to examine each individual part. But that's not the way a Jewish or holistic approach is. It takes everything.

And so when Jesus is the vine, we are saying that Jesus is not just the roots and the trunk. He's also the branches. He's also the leaves.

The whole thing is the vine. You don't just call a vine the trunk and its roots. You call the whole plant the vine, right? So the whole plant, which includes branches, produces fruit.

So if He's the vine and we're the branches, He needs the branches in order to produce the fruit. To me, it's really simple. That He has ordained to do it this way.

In other words, does Jesus need me? No, He doesn't need me at all. That's not what we were saying. He doesn't need you.

He doesn't need Grace Community Church. But in His sovereignty, He has designed to work in identification with you and I. It's a part of grace. Grace is not just what He saved you by.

It's what He's doing in your life today. And part of that grace is employing you in His redemptive enterprise. Wow! I don't know if you noticed, but the beginning of the second service, I was very moved as I looked among you all and I'm just thinking, I don't deserve to be here.

I'm just being honest. That's what I was thinking. And I was thinking, Lord, what a privilege once again to get to brag on you and to boast of you and to tell others about you.

And it's overwhelming. It's grace to forgive me my sins and let me to know Him. Yes, but it's also grace to let me do this.

So, no, He doesn't need me, but He lets me. And that's grace. So, He doesn't need you to produce fruit, but He has ordained.

Now, go to Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8, 9, and 10. Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8, 9, and 10. You know 8 and 9 real well, don't you? You could probably quote it to me.

For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For, connecting word.

You have learned about connecting words, right? For, it's a conjunction. And when you have a for or a therefore, you always want to ask the question, what's it there for? Somebody really thought that was funny. You've just become my favorite person.

No. For, here's why you're saved. One of the reasons the Bible gives us.

For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. See, that's God's ordained purpose. But He just doesn't save you to forgive you so you get to go to heaven when you die.

He saved you to employ you in His redemptive enterprise. You get to be part of the economy of God. You get to be joint heirs with Christ, but also that means co-laborers with Christ.

What a privilege to be yoked to Jesus. And so, since that's His ordained plan, this is the way He chooses to do it. And if we the branches don't cooperate with Him, there will be no fruit.

Interesting, isn't it? When Jesus said, don't say the harvest is how many months away? Four months away. The fields are widened to harvest. Pray ye therefore that the Father, the Master will send laborers into the vineyards.

Why? Because God can't do that apart from your prayers? No. It's because He's ordained to work through your prayers because He gets more glory at doing something by answering prayer than just to go ahead and do it Himself without your prayers. That make sense? So that's what I meant.

Okay, thank you brother for everything you've shared with us so far. My question was on, it's from the men's retreat and you were preaching on John 15, 1 through 10. And Josh and I both talked to you about how we had this false idea that if you abide in me and my word abides in you, ask what you wish and it will be done for you.

That it's like this some form of a scale where our output reaches a certain level and then ding, God sees that, points to it and goes, okay, I'll answer the prayer because it's been stacked up so far. We're very happy to get rid of that and we're gracious to have seen what you showed us. When we talked with you afterwards, you took us to Hebrews 5-7 and I was just, I didn't get to write down much at that point and I was wondering if you could open that up a little bit better.

I want to understand 5-7 in relation to John 15 better. Sure, sure. To help everyone understand the context of the question.

In that message that night I said, our focus is on our faith and that's where it should never be. It should be on Christ who is the author and the finisher of our faith. And I asked a question that night.

So let me ask all of you, because some of you weren't there. If you have faith in a person, whose labors produce that faith in your heart towards them, did you produce it? Did you do the labor? Did you do the work that made you to trust them or did they? They did. You trusted them.

Your trust in them is very almost automatic. If they prove trustworthy, you trust them, right? So it's their work that produced the faith that you have in them. That make sense with everybody? So the same is true with faith in God.

When I see Him, as this book reveals Him and the Spirit allows my heart to believe this and see this, you don't have to work and strive and struggle to have faith. You have it because you see He's trustworthy. So the key to increasing your faith is not trying to get psychological gymnastics so you can feel faith.

And what you're asking and seeking is you're trying to feel a certain degree of assurance. And if you can get your faith to increase to a certain level, that's what Zach was saying, then God says, oh hey, you met the bar. You met the standard.

I like faith. I don't respond. I can't please me without faith.

I'll give you what you want. That's how most of us think. If I can just have enough faith, I'll get what I'm seeking.

And that's wrong. In fact, that's a spirit of self-righteousness. The same spirit of the Pharisees is believing that you could impress God so that He would do what you want Him to do.

Okay, let's go to Hebrews 5. I want to make sure you understand. You're not the author and the finisher of your faith. How many of us need our faith increased? Me.

I got both hands up, brother. I want my faith to increase. And the way to have your faith increased is to look to Him.

See Him for as He is. Look at His beauty. Look at His honesty.

He can't lie. He's never lied. Look at His goodness.

Look at the mercy, the grace. Look at Him. And as you meditate and muse and contemplate what this Book who reveals Him, faith happens.

It happens. I just met brother John for the first time this week, and I've heard about him for several years, but I never knew him. Prayed for him, but didn't know who I was praying for, really.

But I've gotten to know him just a little bit, and our conversations, our hearts, when we both talk with each other, it's like two tuning forks on the same frequency. They say, I have felt that, brother. And if this man told me something that he wanted to do for me, I would believe that and expect that.

I like cornbread. Anybody like cornbread? My wife makes the best cornbread. I don't want sugar in my cornbread.

I don't want to eat cake. I want cornbread. And in the cast iron skillet.

And if my wife said, sweetheart, I'll tell you why I got a surprise for you. I'm going to have cornbread tonight. I can just make a meal out of cornbread and butter.

And do you think I would sit here and scratch my head and say, I wonder if she'll really do that or not? I wonder if she might forget she made me that promise. No. I'm already ready.

Why? Because I've learned her. And the more time I've spent with her, the more I've learned I can trust her. It's the same way with your heavenly father.

Get to knowing and faith will increase. Okay. Now Hebrews five.

I remember sharing with the young men the other night that one of the issues that I struggled with for a long time after I was converted is how Jesus could really relate to me. Because I know he was a man, but he's still God. And he's perfect.

And he never sinned. Now, how can you relate to somebody like me who sinned and sins a lot? And how can I relate to him when he's got this nature that's divine and holy and perfect? And do you understand the struggle I was experiencing? Anybody else? How can God relate to me and I relate to him? Until I was preaching through the book of Hebrews and I saw this Hebrews chapter seven. Now I'm going to read out the new King James version, but I want somebody, does anybody have a King James version here? Wow.

Nobody does. He's already gone. You have the King James version.

Okay. I'll have, may have you read it. I've got it here on my iPad.

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death and was heard because of his godly fear. The King James doesn't say because he, he was heard because of his godly fear. It says he was heard what brother? Can you read it? He was heard in that he feared.

And this is really the most accurate translation of that verse. Now it doesn't mean the King James is the most accurate translation. I'm not saying that I'm simply saying that in this case, the King James actually translated it properly.

According to the Greek, the word fear can be translated godly reverence or godly fear. It can be translated that, but that's not what the text is saying. It's saying that he was afraid of something.

He was literally a fearful of something. And when was that? Well, the verse seven tells us when it was. He offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to him.

When did that happen? The garden of Gethsemane. That's what this verse is about. And what was he afraid of? The cup.

The cup was what? Your sin, my sin. And not just the sin, but the judgment of God on those sins. And he was afraid.

And so he's motivated to cry, Father, if there be any other way, any other way, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, thy will be done. Why? Because the Father heard him.

Look at again verse seven. And he was able, he believed, he prayed to Him who was able to save him from death. And he was heard in that he feared.

In the thing that feared, God heard him and helped him. Now, here's what the Lord showed me. At that moment, the Father was asking Jesus to do something that was completely unnatural to him.

He was asking him to take the cup full of our sin and his righteous, red-hot wrath and judgment against it, and to press it to his lips and to drink it. He was asking Jesus to take our sin and his hatred, God's hatred of our sin, and to be cut off from God and cursed by God and to willingly take that and be identified with that. Now, you stop and think with me for a moment.

Would a holy, pure man want to do that? Would a man who hated sin and was repulsed by it want to embrace it and be identified with it? Completely unnatural. There was nothing in him that wanted that. You can say, but yeah, he wanted it for me because he loved me.

But you've got to understand what he's embracing. He's got to take your sin and be considered the sinner. There's nothing in him that would be enticed.

There's nothing in him that would—he hates this. You think Jesus doesn't really know what it means to be tempted like you. You have no idea what you're saying.

Can you imagine what it was like for the pure mind of Christ to have Satan suggest evil thoughts in it? His perfection and purity must have really come under severe and harsh attack. It must have been painful to even have that thought in your mind. Oh, he knows what it's like to be tempted.

And now at the garden, he's tempted like no other time, even more in the wilderness. Now it's the Father saying, Son, take the cup and listen to him. Is there any other way? Is there any other way? I don't want this.

Is there any other way? And he cries out to God, but God does something for him. He helps him to take the cup. Now listen to me.

Every time you're tempted to sin, that's not unnatural for you. That's natural to the flesh, that is, to the flesh. It's unnatural to deny the flesh.

Jesus was tempted to do the unnatural just as you are tempted and called upon to submit to God and do the unnatural thing, not to follow the flesh, but to submit yourself to him. And when I saw that, I saw he knows exactly what it's like when I am tempted. And that's why he says in verse 8, Though a son, he learned obedience by the things that he suffered, having been perfected, he became the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him.

I hope I'm making sense. I wasn't prepared to talk about this, but I know that Jesus knows when I'm asked, when there's this desire that it's natural to my appetites, and I'm asked not to give in to that which is natural, but to do that which is supernatural, trusting God. That's what the father was asking him to do.

Does that make sense? Any follow-up questions on this? Oh yes, he knows. My Jesus knows. Someone asked, this is in regards to the men's retreat.

I know at the men's retreat you warned about how you speak about abiding in Christ. Men will begin now brainstorming a better formula. Wake up earlier now, change certain external things.

You express that abiding is not just an A B equals C formula. However, is there actual benefits from putting external changes such as waking up early, etc., as we seek to abide closer to Christ? Can you please elaborate? You do need to get up and read your Bible, and study it by the way, not just read it. I said at the men's retreat that there is no one verse that tells you to read the Bible individually.

All the verses command study and meditate on it. I was reminded that there was one verse in the New Testament that says give yourselves to the reading, or pay attention to the reading of scripture, but that's public reading. But individually, I'm not just to read my Bible, I'm to study it, I'm to meditate, I'm to ingest it.

And that requires the discipline of time. It requires discipline. Prayer requires discipline, because again, the flesh doesn't want to pray.

That's the last thing the flesh wants to do is pray. It is amazing when you do pray how your mind will drift unlike any other time. Interruptions occur, your mind wanders off.

You could be concentrating on something at work, your mind never drifts. A thought that's contrary to what you're doing never enters your mind. But the moment you begin to pray or read your Bible, what happens? So there is discipline, there is a warfare.

You ever prayed when you feel like you're just, words are not flowing, they're hard, it's like you're slugging in mud. That's spiritual opposition. So yes, discipline is required.

The difference is, what I was referring to that day was, I do not attempt to do these things in the strength of my own power and determination. I look in desperate dependency to Him to be the source of my strength,

that I do and can discipline myself to do that. It's just not sheer human ingenuity and power.

It's the power of the Spirit. And by the way, He's not giving us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind, which literally means discipline. He gives that to us.

Does that make sense? The performance thing is so dangerous because it, it looks so right. We are to do good works. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you.

Now let me stop right there and explain that. Even after my conversion for years, because I'm a performance-oriented person, I'm the legalist. I'm the elder brother by nature.

That's my nature, my human flesh. Give me rules and let me go and watch me. Watch me do this.

That's, that's me, naturally. And I like a challenge. Tell me I can't do something and I'm inspired to try.

And I knew there was, that was not godly. I knew there was something wrong with that. And, and the more I try in my strength, I fail.

And I know that God has grace for me, but I, where is this grace to live holy, to live and be fruitful and productive? I just didn't understand grace, even though I was already converted by now. I was still struggling with grace because it's my nature to struggle with grace. My wife doesn't.

She's never, ever doubted her salvation once she was saved. Me, I, I have doubted many times. Not so much as in these last few years, but because I'm so performance oriented.

Did I do that just right? And by the way, did I do it for the right motive? Introspection is part of that mentality. And introspection is not a good thing. I told someone today, you do need to examine and look within your heart, but you look only as long as it takes you to look away the cross.

You only look in that heart as long as it takes to see you need Jesus. That's the only kind of biblical healthy introspection there is. So I didn't really, I still didn't understand grace.

And so here I am reading one day Philippians chapter two, verse 12. And I come to that verse, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Okay.

I understood that. Yep. I got that down.

But am I, am I fearful enough? Am I trembling enough? I don't know if I'm trembling enough. And I don't know how many times I'd read Philippians. I don't know why I never saw verse 13.

I read it. I guess I was so focused on verse 12, working it out. But this day I read for it is God who worketh in you.

And then the light came on. So here's my definition of grace. And I'll go back and finish that verse.

Here's my definition. Grace, grace is not God's impersonal force. Like in the star war movies, you know, let the force be with you.

Grace is not some impersonal force or a gift that an impersonal gift, a commodity that he drops in you. No, no, no, no. Philippians two 13 tells me grace is God himself active in me.

That's what grace is. It's God, the person active in me. And what is he doing? Here's what grace is.

Giving me the desire, the will, and the power to do his good pleasure. There's my definition of grace. Undeserved kindness, giving me the desire and the power to do what I cannot do by myself.

And it's God that's doing it. It's God in you doing that. It's the life of the vine.

You see how all this starts coming together. It's the life of Christ in you who's giving you the desire and now the ability to do his good pleasure and please him. So yeah, I'm involved here.

I'm working, but what's my work? To believe upon him whom God has sent. To trust that he's going to keep his word and give me so that when I move out, I'm not waiting back here sitting on my hands waiting for some power to zap me. Because that's why some people view grace.

This overwhelming urge. No, I by faith obey. By faith I obey.

Believing that when I step out, he himself is going to give me the power to do and obey him. That's grace. Am I making sense? We've been told so long, so wrong that grace is opposed to effort.

It's not opposed to effort. It ensures effort. Grace is opposed to earning, to the attitude and spirit of earning something from God.

It's not opposed to effort. It inspires and motivates that effort and makes it possible. Go ahead, Seth.

Brother, you've already answered a lot of this, but just maybe one more piece to it. Your third message was pivotal for me. I felt like when I was born again 12 years ago, getting that rest from knowing that resting in Christ, being desperate, the whole theme came to a head for me at that third message.

But I think just for the sake of the people who weren't there, could you just run through that connection? You said it really came to a head for me when you said it's reflexive. Like when we're abiding in Christ, there's a reflexive work. And the reason I want you to cover that again is because two people afterwards, including my son, just had in the past been confused about, well, where is the role of works then? I mean, Satan can always come at you.

He picks away at you saying, yeah, but, yeah, but is it just abiding in Christ? Is that enough? What about works? You got to do stuff, you got to do stuff. So that portion where you said it's reflexive, I thought that was really valuable. That was actually the fourth message.

Okay, that's the one that was very helpful. For you ladies, your husbands, they have pretty decent patience. At least they did with me.

I don't know how they are with you. Because every session, I would say, that's the next session we'll build on this. And then it's the fourth session that's really going to make sense to you.

It's all come together. Yeah. How many want to love Jesus more? Yeah, of course we do.

So how do we love Jesus more? What should we do to increase our love for Him? And what are the common answers? Read your Bible more. Pray more. Fast.

Keep His commandments. Spiritual disciplines. I'm surprised somebody didn't say witnessing.

Evangelism. These are the things we are told and think. If I could just increase these, then I'm loving, and I'm showing Him I love Him more.

But of course that's not grace. It's not work. It's works.

It's you trying to do those things in order to be accepted by God. How many of you would be honest? You don't need to raise your hand. I guess you shouldn't, but I still would be curious.

I was with a group of preachers. I was doing a pastor's conference, and they started asking me questions during the lunch. We ate lunch together, then I was supposed to preach.

For the next three hours, I answered questions. I didn't even get to preach that day, but I really did because in my answers, I preached to them. And I asked those guys, I said, come on, when you sin, tell me how do you react to your sin? I knew what I was going to get.

And they reacted just like their members react. They want to go high. They're embarrassed.

They're ashamed. And I said, no wonder your people don't know how to deal with their sins. You don't.

You don't approach it by the gospel. So you want to love Jesus more. You want to experience Him more.

And the first thing we think, I've got to prove something to Him. Why is that? I really want to get that. I didn't say this the other day, but this has come to me.

Why do I do that? Because you believe you're not acceptable to God and you've got to earn it. That's the motivation. You don't really believe God loves you like He says He loves you.

And you've got to prove lovable to Him. And I know what I'm talking about. I remember as a little boy, as I told those men how my parents treated me, and I never felt loved or accepted by them.

And so I transposed and projected that to God. How could two imperfect people who are supposed to love me, my mother and father, and they don't accept me and love me, how's a perfect God going to love me? Increasing your love for God is not going to make God love you one iota more than He already does. All right? So how biblically should I increase my love? Okay.

Turn to 1 John chapter 4. And the Apostle John tells us, 1 John chapter 4, verse 10, "Ought that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another. We'll come back to verse 11, that thought in a moment. Now go to verse 19, "We love Him because He first loved us." Now here's what that means.

Here you are, a sinner. You don't know the love of God. You've never experienced the love of God, knowingly experienced the love of God.

And now God opens your eyes, He opens your heart, and He pours His love into your heart. Isn't that what Romans 5, says, "And hope does not make a shame, for the love of God is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is given unto us." You experience the love of God. And what happens to your heart in response? You love Him back.

You automatically, immediately love Him in return. Why? Because God's love for us creates a reflex in our hearts. Our love for God is reflexive.

It's a response to the experience of God's love. And they illustrate this, if you've ever gone to a physician for a, a physical, and he's testing your reflexes, what does he get? The little rubber mallet, little triangular rubber mallet, and he whacks you below the knee, and what happens? I ask the guys, have you ever tried not to, try to make your knee not move? I have tried, I, you know, there's that rebel in me, I guess. And, and I try, and you can't.

The stimulus has hit the nerve, and the nerve responds in reflex. And that's the human heart, when the love of God is poured out on it. It can't help but love Him.

It can't help it, but in reflex, love Him. That's the human heart. The key, therefore, is to experience more of the love of God for yourself, and you will love others.

And that's what he means by that in verse 11. If you have experienced the love of God, and this is love, verse 10, not that we love God, but He loved us and His Son. Beloved, if God has loved us, we ought to love one another.

In fact, you will love one another. The reason there is division in churches is because those folks haven't been experiencing lately the love of God for them. Because once you experience the love of God, your heart not only loves God in reflex, but it loves your brother.

That's the reflex. And that's why Jude would say to us in Jude 1, or Jude 21, keep yourselves in the love of God. Why do you tell people to keep themselves in the love of God if they're Christians already and God loves them? Because Jude understands the initial experience of God's love is wonderful, amazing, and we'll never forget it.

But that's not enough. You need to experience it today. Because if you experience it today, you do love Him.

And that's the secret to evangelism. Lord Jones is one of my Hebrews, but I didn't quite agree with him on every point with his views on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But I think he's absolutely right when he says that the love of God is a part of that experience of being filled with the Spirit.

It is a tangible experiential love that's put into your heart that creates a boldness. When you knew God loved you in the beginning, when you were saved, you were so joyful, so joyful that you were bold. You wanted people to know and you wanted them to experience the same love.

Where did it come from? It came from you experiencing the love of God. And that's what I believe being filled with the Spirit is. It's the same thing as abiding.

It's experiencing the love of God afresh and then continually thereafter. And so Paul prays in Ephesians chapter 3, and we'll go there since the brother wanted me basically to preach my sermon again. And I can, I can do it word for word for you.

Ephesians chapter 3 beginning with verse 17. This is great prayer of Paul for the Ephesians, his own converts. And he's praying for them.

Watch what he prays for. That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Now stop and ask yourself a question.

Why is the apostle praying for his own converts who he knows are saved? He was there when they got saved. Why is he praying that Christ would dwell in their hearts by faith when he already does dwell in their hearts by faith? Do you read your Bibles like that? Do you? When you read something that doesn't make sense, do you stop and ask yourself what in the world? Lord, what do you mean by this? Holy Spirit, what did you mean when you made Paul say that? Ask questions. Well, it's got to mean this, that there's more of Jesus Christ to experience through faith.

That's all it can mean, right? There's more of the Lord to experience through faith in you. And then he continues that you being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints. What is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge? Okay, let's stop and ask another question.

How do you know something if it passes knowledge? That sounds like a contradiction. Well, it isn't a contradiction because he's talking about two different kinds of knowledge. There is a knowledge of God's love that is real and experiential that surpasses human intellect.

And that's what he's praying for these people, that they would know the height, the breadth, the width, the depth of this love that they had experienced at conversion. They'd experienced more and more of it, that it passes their intellect to even comprehend or explain. Why would you be praying that way? Because it's necessity.

It's the very fuel of the Christian life. When I experienced the love of God, my heart in reflex, in reflex loves Him and the church, my brothers and sisters, so that you may be filled with the fullness of God. There it is.

That's why I say experiencing the love of God afresh is the same thing as being filled with the Holy Spirit, which is the same thing as letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, which is the same thing as abiding and abiding. These are all synonyms to explain the same thing, just different aspects of it. Does that make sense? Does that help? Thank you, Brother Seth.

I was really thankful that you went through and kind of re-explained the reflexive thing. That was super awesome and helpful. And I understand the logic, you know, like not being introspective, but looking to Christ.

But like when you get to that point, when you realize I'm dry, I'm in need, how do you experience Him? Because I get there and then I'm like, oh, I need to read my Bible more, and I need to pray more. And it's like, you know what I, you see what I mean? Like how do I experience Christ? You do need to read your Bible or study it and meditate it more and pray more, but you do it for a different reason. You don't read your Bible and pray more in order to gain more knowledge about God only.

But as you're gaining in the knowledge of God, you're gaining in the experience of God. The Word of God by the Holy Spirit through prayer is the way we practice relationship with Him or the primary way. There are many other ways.

And that's the way we abide in the vine. So when we're reading the Word, as I told the men this week, when I'm reading, this was huge, it changed my life. When I read the Bible, I don't read just for information like I had been doing.

I'm now reading to see how big God is. I'm wanting to see Him, view Him, look upon Him. That's what faith needs.

Faith has only one object, God. And the more it can see clearly God, the more faith increases, right? The more I see of His beauty, the more I'm stricken by that beauty. It's 2 Corinthians 3.18. How do we get transformed? How do we get transformed? He says, by beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord and are transformed from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

And the mirror, I believe, is the Word of God as it portrays Christ, reveals Christ. So the more I can see Jesus, man, He's beautiful. You know, my wife is the most beautiful person in the world to me, in the physical realm, okay? And we're both getting older, and I know I'm not pretty anymore.

I mean, I have to look at myself in the mirror, I know the truth. I'm not going to lie to myself anymore about it. I was working, helping one of the brothers in the church the other day build fence, and boy, about to kill me.

I mean, it just about killed me. And I'm thinking, I guess I am as old as I really am. But I don't feel like I am, you know, but anyway.

But she, you know, she's beautiful. And the more I get to know her, the more attracted. It's just, it's the same principle.

And the way I see Him is through the Word. So I'm reading the Word of God, yes, and I'm seeking Him through prayer so I can see Him. But I believe what I'm reading.

And when I believe what I'm reading, it becomes real. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. And that's just up me reading your Bible, or hearing the Bible read.

It means the Spirit of God takes that Word, and He gives it life to you. That makes, that makes sense? Yeah, it does. And when, when the sessions, the video, that, I think that's in the fourth, the last session, I elaborate even more.

But it'll help even answer more, I think.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/jB2VFCGb4eo.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/michael-durham/question-and-answer-session-on-abiding-in-christ/>

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